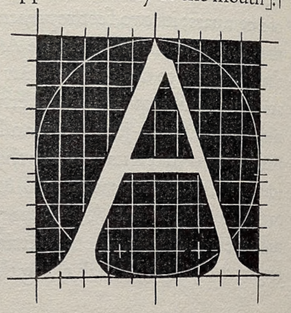
in Latin, but in their own vernacular, wherein most of their words end in A; as when they say: *vna charta, vna bella dona, mya sorella,* and a thousand other like things. For which reason, when they consort with Italians, as at the fairs and banquets of Lyon, the Lyonnais ladies often courteously pronounce E like A, as when they say: *Choma vous choma chat affeta,* and many other like words, which I omit for brevity's sake. On the contrary, the ladies of Paris very often pronounce A like E, as when they say: *Mon mery eſt a la porte de Peris, ou il se faict peier,* instead of saying: *Mon mary eſt a la porte de Paris, ou il se faict paier.* This manner of speaking comes from being accustomed to it in childhood. The English, too, have this vice of pronouncing A like E, at least when they speak in Latin, when they say: *Domine, kenis intreuit kemerem, et comedit totes kernes quæ erent in erke, Iesus Merie, quid feciemus;* instead of saying: *Domine, canis intrauit cameram, et comedit totas carnes quæ erant in archa, Iesus Maria, quid faciemus.* This vice is excusable in them because of the difficulty of their enunciation, which comes mostly from the depths of their throat, emerging in a narrow space between their teeth. Whoever would learn to pronounce A properly, let him divert himself a little by reading the second book of a work by an author named Galeotus Martius Narniensis, entitled *De Homine,* at the place where he treats 'De literis,' and he will there find set forth very clearly and at length its true pronunciation where he says: A *ex duabus lineis conſtat, quæ suo contactu angulum conſtituunt acutum, spiritum ab vtraque parte palati emanentem indicant. Quæ vero per transuersum posita eſt, certam mensuram hiatus oſtendit, quanto opus eſt in huius elementi enunciatione.** That is to say: 'A is formed of two lines which touch at the upper end and make an acute angle. And therefore it is a symbol of the voice coming forth between the two parts of the palate [& upper concavity of the mouth].† The line which is placed cross-wise gives also the exact measure of the hiatus required in pronouncing this letter and vowel A.' Thus the cross-bar of the A signifies that it should be pronounced with the mouth not too far open or too much closed.

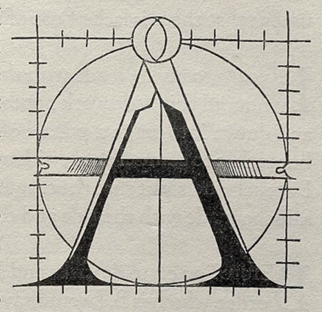
* *The book was printed about 1470 by an anonymous printer.*

† *The passage in brackets is not in the Latin.*



THE second A which I have promised, and have drawn reversed, as you see it in this figure, is made in every respect and everywhere like the preceding one, except that the thick leg is in this case the first one, and in the other it is the last. Beware lest you conclude hastily that it is not reversed; for I have known many a man who made it thus reversed for the preceding one, which is in the right position. This one is thus made to assist and give information to the goldsmiths and engravers, who, with their burin, graver, or other tool, engrave and cut the Attic letters reversed,—to the left, as they say,—so that they will be right when they are printed and presented in their proper & seemly aspect. I have purposely made it all white, & its square black,—just the opposite of the other,—to the end that you may not go astray between them. For, as I have said, I have seen and still see many who go astray. Before the printed letter is complete it is made twice reversed & twice right. It is reversed the first time in the steel punches, in which the letter is to the left; the matrices have the letter right; the letter of cast metal is, like the said punches, reversed. And, lastly, on the printed page, the letter appears in the right position, and in the aspect requisite for reading currently. I have forgotten to say that the thick leg of the A is as one of the units of its square in breadth, and the other leg a third of a unit. The cross-bar should be of two thirds of the breadth of the said thick leg, as you can see in the figures hereinbefore drawn & proportioned.

PUrsuant to what I have said, I have here designed and drawn an A wherein a Compass and a Rule are shown; or, if you would express it otherwise, say that I have made an A with a Compass and a Rule according to the secret teaching of the wise Ancients, who, in order to lead us to make the Attic letter properly, did fashion the first of their letters in the image and representation of the two unerring tools which are necessary and requisite for making well, not only the Attic letter, but also the *lettre de forme,* and every other. Among all hand-tools the Compass is King & the Rule, Queen; that is to say, they are the two noblest & most powerful, below which all other tools and all well-balanced and fitly made things are equal.



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